

# THE AUTHENTIC EDGE

Helping you to become who you are meant to be -- in your **personal life, relationships** and **career**.

July 8, 2025



Have you ever talked yourself out of doing something important—not because you weren't ready, but because you were already convinced it would go wrong? That's catastrophizing at work. It's more than just negative thinking—it's a fear-based brain loop that not only hijacks your sense of possibility but reinforces codependent behaviors that keep you stuck in overgiving, overthinking, and self-doubt.

In this week's edition of The Authentic Edge, we explore how catastrophizing feeds codependency, why it keeps emotionally intelligent people playing small, and how to interrupt the loop that convinces you not to try. You'll also find a brain-based tip for rewiring the fear response, reflections from my own healing journey, and upcoming fall workshops designed to help you break free from the survival patterns that block your Authentic Self.

Therapy can be a powerful tool in this process. It creates space to examine the fears behind your catastrophic thinking, unhook from childhood survival patterns, and strengthen your ability to self-regulate. Whether you're just starting out or deep into your growth journey, the right therapeutic support can help you shift from fear-driven choices to empowered, authentic living.

If you're tired of predicting disaster and ready to start expecting more from yourself and your life, you're in the right place.

Warm regards,

*Anne Dranitsaris*

**Did You Know?**

Did you know that while the exact percentage varies by condition and individual, it is fair to say that catastrophizing is a key cognitive pattern

driving distress in at least 50–70% of anxiety-related mental health issues. Its role in depression, trauma, chronic pain, and even everyday stress highlights its pervasive influence—and the importance of addressing it in any treatment or developmental approach to emotional well-being.

## In This Week's Newsletter

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**Feature Article: How  
Catastrophizing Keeps  
Codependency Alive**

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**Brain-Based Tip for  
Dealing with  
Catastrophizing**

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**Did You Know?  
Catastrophizing creates  
mental health issues**

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**Catastrophizing:  
Another Word for Making  
Yourself Miserable**

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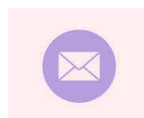
**Authentic Reflections: A  
Love Story Rooted in  
Growth**

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**Upcoming Events:  
Fall 2025**

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### How Catastrophizing Keeps Codependency Alive and Kills Your Growth

You have an idea. A good one. Maybe it's applying for that new role, setting a boundary with someone who drains you, or even just saying no to something you don't want to do. But then your brain kicks in:

"What if they think I'm selfish?"

"What if I screw it up and embarrass myself?"

"What if I fail, and everyone sees I'm not good enough?"

So you stay quiet. You say yes when you mean no. You overextend yourself (again). And just like that, your fear-driven brain wins—keeping you stuck in a cycle of people-pleasing, self-sacrifice, and low self-worth.

This is the invisible trap where catastrophizing and codependency reinforce each other. One whispers that everything will go wrong. The other whispers that your worth depends on not letting anyone down. Together, they give you a perfect reason not to risk, not to ask for more, and not to change.

### Read the Full Article



### Breaking the Pattern: A Love Story Rooted in Growth

For years, I found myself caught in the same painful cycle. No matter who I dated, the outcome was always the same. It wasn't that all the men were the same—it was that I kept becoming the same version of myself in every relationship. Adaptable. Accommodating. Attuned to everyone else's needs but disconnected from my own.

Early in each relationship, I'd be confident, grounded, expressive—my full self. But as the connection deepened, something in me would start to shift. I'd begin to mold myself, piece by piece, into what I thought they needed. It wasn't conscious. I wasn't trying to deceive anyone. I was just trying to feel safe. I became more agreeable, less opinionated, emotionally available but emotionally invisible. I'd shrink.

One day, after yet another relationship that had quietly eroded my sense of self, my business partner said something I'll never forget: "I like you better when you're not seeing anyone."

### Read the Full Article

One meta-analysis published in *Psychological Bulletin* in 2014 found that catastrophizing accounted for between 7% and 31% of the variance in emotional distress, depending on the disorder and the population studied. In youth populations, another study published in the *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology* showed that catastrophizing mediated up to 50% of the relationship between negative life events and symptoms of anxiety and depression.

What would your life look like if you stopped expecting disaster—and started expecting more from yourself and your future? If that shift feels hard, I can help. Let's connect. I offer coaching and psychotherapy to help you shift from fear-based patterns to empowered action.

## Catastrophizing is another word for making ourselves miserable!

No one said is better than Mark Twain when he remarked, "I am an old man and have known a great many troubles, but most of them never happened." This is the essence of catastrophizing when we make up scary stories and then act as though they are true.

Catastrophizing—the tendency to assume the worst-case scenario or exaggerate the potential for harm—is a powerful cognitive distortion that plays a significant role in many mental health conditions. We all do it and the worst part is that we believe the scary things we tell ourselves that might happen.

While it's difficult to pinpoint an exact percentage across all disorders, research consistently shows that catastrophizing both contributes to the development of mental health issues and exacerbates existing symptoms.

In anxiety disorders, catastrophizing is especially prominent. Studies suggest that up to 70–80% of individuals with anxiety experience some form of chronic catastrophizing. It drives the constant scanning for danger, obsessive worry, and inability to feel safe, even in non-threatening situations.

Similarly, in depression, catastrophizing increases symptom severity and impairs recovery. People who catastrophize often experience hopelessness, helplessness, and persistent negative thoughts about their circumstances and future—hallmarks of depressive thinking.

Catastrophizing is also closely linked to trauma-related conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In these cases, the brain stays stuck in a loop of anticipating threat, reliving past pain, and expecting danger, even in safe environments. This reinforces emotional dysregulation, avoidance behaviors, and hypervigilance, making healing and development more difficult.

## Brain Tip for Dealing with Catastrophizing

### Interrupt the Catastrophe Loop with Bilateral Stimulation

Catastrophizing often begins as a mental thought loop—but it's actually a whole-brain, whole-body reaction. When we start imagining worst-case scenarios, the amygdala—the brain's alarm system—triggers a cascade of fear-based responses: shallow breathing, racing heart, muscle tension, and obsessive thinking. This "hijacks" the prefrontal cortex, making it nearly impossible to think clearly, regulate emotions, or talk yourself out of the spiral.

To stop this loop, you have to regulate your nervous system first, before you try to rationalize your way out of it.

### Tip for Dealing with Catastrophizing



# Workshops for Women on the Path to Authentic Living

## Fall 2025

These workshops and groups are designed to support breaking free from the limitations of roles, beliefs and fears to get on YOUR path to individuating and achieving your authentic potential.

### - **60+ Women's Group: Continuing the Journey**

A soulful, supportive space for women 60 and older who are committed to deepening their journey of individuation. Share wisdom, reflect on purpose, and embrace the next chapter with intention.

### - **Imposter Syndrome Workshop: Reclaim Your Inner Authority**

Quiet the inner critic and step fully into your worth. This experiential workshop unpacks the root causes of imposter syndrome and provides brain-based strategies to rewrite your internal narrative.

### - **Breaking the Chains of Attachment: A Codependency Workshop**

Learn to identify unhealthy attachment patterns, understand emotional entanglements, and create boundaries that support freedom and authentic connection.

More information about the sessions is coming soon. If any of the groups or workshops sound interesting to you, contact me at [anned@annedranitsaris.com](mailto:anned@annedranitsaris.com). **Fall Sessions:** October. Limited group size – secure your place early

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## Just a Reminder (Asking Is Hard—but I'm Doing It Anyway)

I've poured everything into my next book, *Rethinking Codependency for the Emotionally Intelligent*. It's the book I needed years ago—before burnout, before endless self-fixing, before I realized how codependency can disguise itself as perfectionism, helping, and always being “the strong one.”

But here's the truth: when I approached publishers, I was told bluntly,

“Come back when you have 10,000+ followers.”

**I kid you not.**

The work is ready. The message is needed. But to get it into the world, I need your help.

If my words have ever resonated with you—or helped you feel seen—will you support this next step by following, sharing, or subscribing?

It's not just about numbers. It's about reaching the people who are still stuck, still silent, still thinking they're alone.

Follow on **Facebook**

Connect on **Instagram:** @annedranitsaris

Follow and Connect on **LinkedIn**

► Subscribe on **YouTube**

Explore my **website:** [www.annedranitsaris.com](http://www.annedranitsaris.com)

And stay tuned: **TikTok** is coming soon. Quick hits. No fluff. Just truth.

Thanks for being here. **And thank you—for helping me take this next step.**

—Anne



### Anne Dranitsaris, PhD

For over 40 years, I've been helping individuals, couples, leaders, and entrepreneurs break free from limiting beliefs, codependence, Imposter Syndrome, and other patterns that hold them back from living as their Authentic Selves. Through my work as a psychotherapist, leadership coach, and behavioral change expert, I've had the privilege of guiding countless people on their journeys to discover their true potential and lead lives aligned with who they're meant to be.

For me, the journey to connect with our Authentic Self is a lifelong quest—one that requires courage, introspection, and an openness to transformation. My work is deeply personal, shaped by my own experiences with family dynamics, emotional growth, and the path to authenticity. My passion is empowering others to thrive, and I feel privileged to share this work with everyone I encounter. If you'd like to learn more about how I can help you on your own transformative journey, contact me at [anned@annedranitsaris.com](mailto:anned@annedranitsaris.com).